

**BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE
5 OCTOBER 2020**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets
- 1.2 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement Officer has been involved in.
- 1.3 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Officer.
- 3.2 This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in January 2020.

3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Council Plan.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However, in the course of debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items included within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects

5.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external bodies/groups has taken place regarding funding proposals for Committee Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 With reference to the Council's Constitution, Section 9.3 Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.

7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Baldock Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2020/21. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year, including balances and past expenditure.

7.3 Funding available for the Committee to allocate during 2020/21 is summarised below:

	2019/20 Carry Forward	2020/21 Base Budget	Total Budget
Baldock Town	£128	£2,400	£2,528
Baldock East	£262	£1,000	£1,262
Arbury	£0	£880	£880
Weston & Sandon	£157	£700	£857
	£547	£4,980	£5,527

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.2 Community Engagement Updates

8.2.1 Events Update

Covid-19 has had and is continuing to have a damaging effect on the excellent calendar of events held in Baldock. Since the start of the year, only the Baldock Beast Half Marathon has been possible due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

It was hoped that events would reconvene during the Autumn months but sadly this has not been the case with Balstock Community Music festival (Sept), Baldock 5km Rat Run (Sept), Baldock Chartered Street Fair (Oct) and St Marys Community Fireworks (Nov) all being cancelled.

As well as being important community events for the town these activities also helped to drive footfall for the town and income for local charities and good causes.

At the time of writing this report the Baldock Cycle Challenge (rescheduled from July to 1st November) and the Baldock Christmas Fayre (5th December) are still hoping to run but are subject to Covid-19 and any further restrictions as a result of the Pandemic.

Baldock Chartered Street Fair

For the 1st time since the 2nd World War it has been necessary to cancel the Baldock Chartered Fair. The Baldock Community Engagement Officer (CEO) has been liaising with the organisers, colleagues at Highways and at North Herts Safety Advisory Group but unfortunately due to issues around social distancing and requirements around the Covid-19 Risk assessment the event has been cancelled.

The TTRO for the event was also refused due to the current Pandemic which rendered the event impossible to operate safely.

In order to ensure the Charter, Abbots Amusements will be bringing one fairground item to Baldock for the opening day of the Fair on 2nd October. The ride will be operating during the time but users will not be charged but instead asked to make a donation to the NHS.

Baldock Cycle Challenge

The Baldock Cycle Challenge was originally due to be held on 14th July but was subsequently postponed until September and then November. The Event Director has liaised with British Cycling and is confident that the event can be held safely and meet guidelines in terms of social distancing. The new date for the event is Sunday 1st November 2020.

The Baldock CEO will be assisting the Event Director and the Baldock Events Forum throughout the process with support in the pre planning of the event and the necessary paperwork for North Herts Safety Advisory Group. The Baldock CEO will also be in attendance on the day of the event providing signage and marshalling support to ensure the day runs smoothly.

Community Facilities Capital Projects

Two of Baldock's venues benefitted from funding from the Community Facilities Capital Projects Scheme back in March 2020. Both Baldock Methodist Church and Baldock Community Centre received funding to assist with essential refurbishment works. At the Methodist Church enhancement works were carried out to replace the kitchen and fit new toilets which were DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) Compliant while at the Community Centre works carried out included refurbishing the male and female toilets and replacing flooring throughout the building. The Baldock CEO liaised with both staff and contractors at the venues to ensure works were carried out effectively. Both projects are now complete and will help to drive footfall and attract new users to both venues.

Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre

The Baldock CEO continues to liaise and support staff at Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre with the Phase 2 works at the building. At the various stages of the works the Baldock CEO will arrange the release of funds as part of the buildings full repairing lease arrangement.

Tree Planting on White Horse Street

The Baldock CEO was requested by Baldock Town Councillors to look at the possibility of planting 2 more trees on the grassed area of White Horse Street next to the Baldock Methodist Church. The issue was discussed with colleagues in Grounds Maintenance but due to spacing issues and also underground cabling and wiring it was deemed that this area would not be suitable for further planting. As part of the enhancement works in the Town Centre, trees were planted throughout the High Street and White Horse Street. The planting of further trees could be contravening Planning rules.

8.3 Highways Matters

- 8.3.1 This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.
- 8.3.2 Any new proposals or revised schemes will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Area Committees have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in December 2019. Section 9.8.2 (h) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides that they may: "establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically with the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. but excluding grants for district-wide activities".
- 9.2 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything provided that it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 9.3 Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 Committee budget 2020/21.
- 10.2 The agreed base budget for this financial year is £5,000. This has been maintained at the same level as 19/20, following full council's agreement to reverse the planned efficiencies. Carry over amounts from the 2019/2020 budgets is £547, giving a total budget remaining for the Committee across the 3-remaining meetings of the 2020/21 financial year of £5,527.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. Area committee funding is awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 - 2020/21 financial year budget sheet.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.

18.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet February 2020.